

REMARKS

Claims 2, 3, 6, 7, 9-11, and 20-21 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, the specification is amended, claims 2, 6, 7, 9-11, and 20-21 are amended and claims 1, 4, 5, 8, and 12-19 are canceled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter found therein. The amendment to the specification corrects a minor informality found therein. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. The cancellation of claims 1, 4-5, 8 and 12-19 renders the rejection of these claims moot. The amendments to the claims 2, 6-7, 9-11, and 20-21 overcome the rejection. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-5 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over JP-B2-07-4320 (JP '420) or JP A-02-029216 (JP '216); and claims 1-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over JP 07-231847 (JP '847) or JP 10-24239 (JP '239). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

None of the applied references discloses or suggest an automatic rice cooking apparatus that includes a rice kettle washing means having an ultrasonic generator propagating ultrasonic waves to water supplied into the rice kettle, as recited in claim 6.

In particular, JP '420 fails to disclose or suggest that the machine has an ultrasonic generator for washing a rice kettle (see Figs. 1-26 of JP '420). Thus, JP '420 does not disclose or suggest an automatic rice cooking apparatus that includes a rice kettle washing means having an ultrasonic generator propagating ultrasonic waves to water supplied into the rice kettle, as recited in claim 6.

JP '216 fails to disclose or suggest that the apparatus has an ultrasonic generator for washing a rice kettle (see Figs. 1-18 of JP '216). Thus, JP '216 does not disclose or suggest an automatic rice cooking apparatus that includes a rice kettle washing means having an

ultrasonic generator propagating ultrasonic waves to water supplied into the rice kettle, as recited in claim 6.

JP '847 discloses that the end face of an absorption hand attachment arm is attached in a vertical movable carriage, and it comes to have the washing brush, which can rotate freely in the location from which it is separated under core of a sucker (paragraph [0007]). The washing brush washes the iron pot (paragraph [0010]). Importantly, nowhere in JP '847 is there a disclosure, or even a suggestion, that the rice kettle washing means has an ultrasonic generator propagating ultrasonic waves to water supplied into the rice kettle, as recited in claim 6.

JP '239 fails to disclose or suggest that the machine is equipped with an ultrasonic generator for washing a rice kettle (see Figs. 1-8). Thus, JP '239 does not disclose or suggest an automatic rice cooking apparatus that includes a rice kettle washing means having an ultrasonic generator propagating ultrasonic waves to water supplied into the rice kettle, as recited in claim 6.

Thus, none of the applied references (JP '420, JP '216, JP '847, or JP '239) disclose or suggest each and every feature of claim 6 and the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102 is inappropriate. Because none of the applied references anticipate or suggest the subject matter of claim 6, the applied references cannot anticipate or suggest the subject matter of claims 2-3, 7, 9-11, and 20-21 depending from claim 6 for the reasons discussed with respect to claim 6 and for the additional features recited therein. Thus, it is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 2-3, 6-7, 9-11, and 20-21 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Kurt P. Goudy
Registration No. 52,954

JAO:KPG/tbm

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OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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